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## ORIGIN OF CERTAIN EARTH CIRCLES

IN an article by Mrs N. D. White, entitled "Captivity among the Sioux, August 18 to September 26, 1862," printed in vol. ix of the *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society*, the following statement appears (page 419):

We could distinctly hear the report of muskets during this battle. We were now in the greatest danger of all our captivity; for, with defeat of the Indians, they were likely to return and slay all the white captives and perhaps some of the half-breeds. The latter appeared to be somewhat alarmed, and consequently we were all put to work by "Black Robinson," throwing up breastworks. I was not a soldier, but soldiers never worked with better will than I did to get those fortifications completed. I used a shovel; my squaw mother used an old tin pan. The remains of those breastworks are still visible, I am told. . . . We were also made to construct breastworks inside the tipi. We sank a hole in the ground about eight feet in diameter and two feet deep, and placed the earth around the pit, thereby increasing the depth to about four feet. In this den eleven of us spent three nights. While the battle was raging, the squaws went out with one-horse wagons to take ammunition to the warriors and to bring in the dead Indians.

This evidently explains the origin of some of the small circular earth-works and depressions met with in Minnesota and the Dakotas.

Referring to a point about ten miles south of Bismarck, N. Dak., Mr G. F. Will states (*American Anthropologist*, 1910, vol. xii, p. 58):

On the top of one of these hills . . . are thirty or forty depressions, six to ten feet across, and with an average depth of about one foot. Excavation here revealed only a very few bone chips and a few signs of burned earth at a depth of six to twelve inches.

These depressions may readily be attributed to excavations made inside of tipis, similar to the one described by Mrs White as having been made just fifty years ago. Assuming the examination to have been made within the depression, although the account is rather ambiguous, the "few signs of burned earth" discovered may well have resulted from fires kindled after the construction of the embankment within the tipi, and earth and mold to a depth "of six to twelve inches" would undoubtedly have accumulated in the depression after the abandonment of the tipi. The group of thirty or forty depressions mentioned by Mr Will probably marks the site of a village composed of that number of tipis, which at some time were fortified within against attack by an enemy.

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